

# The Roles of the Teacher in the Reading Classroom

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*By Arunee Wiriyachitra*

If the goal of communicative language teaching is to have one's students become communicatively competent (Larson-Freeman 1986), then, what roles should the teacher play in enabling his/her students to become communicatively competent in reading?

1. The teacher should be a manager/planner. This means that s/he must be responsible for students' learning both inside and outside of class. In order to do this, s/he must know the needs and wants of the students in reading English. The teacher should specify students' objectives in behavioral and measurable terms and look for a variety of materials and teaching aids for achieving these objectives. The teacher must think of different activities for the whole class, small groups, pairs, and individuals. If the teacher fulfills this role, students will learn according to an appropriate syllabus.
2. The teacher acts as a counselor/social worker. S/he should create an atmosphere of friendliness and trust by listening to students, accepting their ideas/opinions, and if they have any problems finding ways to solve them. In this way, students will feel relaxed, confident, assured, and not embarrassed. This behavior can definitely lower the students' affective filter (Krashen 1984) which, in turn, may enhance learning.
3. The teacher is a supporter. S/he should promote students' self-reliance by encouraging students to work toward independence. In this way, students will develop to the fullest of their ability.
4. The teacher is a motivator/stimulator. The teacher should foster student expectations about the reading and arouse their interest to read. This can be done by asking them warmup questions or giving them a purpose for reading. In this way, students will enjoy learning language and develop a positive attitude towards reading.
5. The teacher is a promoter. S/he should promote thinking skills by encouraging students to participate in discussions and decision-making. Students will, thereby, be equipped with skills they can use their whole life long.
6. The teacher is a language instructor. Even as a reading teacher, s/he cannot avoid teaching language. This can be done by presenting new vocabulary, and teaching language patterns and reading strategies appropriate to a particular genre. Teachers should also use English in class because this is additional language input for the students. Apart from this, teachers should correct students' mistakes in language production but only if the mistakes obstruct communication. In this way, students will learn about language usage while using the language in a reading class.
7. The teacher is a director. The teacher should supervise learning by explaining how students should do specific activities, keeping them constantly engaged in doing reading tasks. The teacher should also allow time for students to work at their own pace or, if a specific amount of time is required for an activity, to watch the time. The teacher should

also make students use the target language and have students get information from reading on their own.

8. The teacher is a monitor. This involves going around the class while students do their reading activities in order to observe their performance, listen to them, and give advice when needed.
9. The teacher is a co-communicator. By working directly on a one-to-one basis with students, the teacher becomes a partner in communication.
10. The teacher is an evaluator. S/he should judge the students' performance by helping them to see if they have completed their tasks successfully, finding out how well they have done, and providing feedback. This serves not only to evaluate students, but helps teachers to evaluate their teaching materials and activities to check whether they have reached the teaching objectives or not.

If the teacher fulfills these roles in the reading class, students will become more efficient readers. They will be provided with opportunities to use the language for a communicative purpose fulfilling the aim of communicative language teaching.

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## References

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